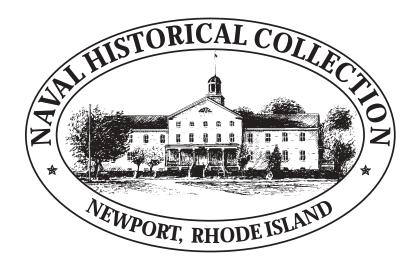
Register of the Papers of Richard G. Colbert



Naval War College Newport, RI



REGISTER OF THE PAPERS OF RICHARD G. COLBERT

Compiled by Evelyn M. Cherpak, Ph.D.

Manuscript Register Series No. 1

Naval Historical Collection Naval War College, Newport, R.I Revised, 2002

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard G. Colbert was born in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1915, the son of Charles F. Colbert, Jr., and Mary Louise Benford Colbert. Colbert spent his formative years in Pittsburgh where his father was a prominent corporate executive in the coal, coke, and alloy business. He graduated from Shadyside Academy in 1933 and entered the United States Naval Academy as a member of the class of 1937.

After graduation from the Academy, Colbert served a two-year tour in USS YORKTOWN (CV-5), Flagship of Carrier Division Two, Aircraft Battle Force. In 1939, he joined USS BARKER (DD-213) in the Asiatic Fleet and in 1942 became her commanding officer when she joined the Atlantic Fleet for operations in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean.

In September 1944, Colbert took command of the destroyer MEADE (DD-602) in the Pacific Fleet and served in that capacity until the end of World War II. Promoted to commander, he joined the Bureau of Naval Personnel as planning officer. In 1948, he was aide and flag secretary to Admiral Richard L. Conolly, Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, in London, England. While serving in this capacity, he met his future bride, Prudence Anne Robertson, daughter of E.J. Robertson, Chairman of London Express Newspaper, Ltd., later Lord Beaverbrook's Newspapers, Ltd. They were married at St. Paul's Cathedral, Knightsbridge, in November 1950.

Colbert next served in the Political-Military Affairs Division of the Chief of Naval Operations. He was a Special Assistant to Admiral Forrest Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations, and accompanied him on a visit to Spain to negotiate for United States bases. He was with Admiral Sherman when he died in Naples, Italy, in August 1951.

Following his tour in Washington in 1953, Commander Colbert became executive officer of the cruiser USS ALBANY (CA-123), flagship of COMBATCRULANT. Two years later he was ordered to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and while there was promoted to captain. His assignment at the Naval War College developed into a long association. Upon completion of his studies, he was selected by Admiral Arleigh A. Burke to organize the Naval Command College, a resident course for senior naval officers from allied nations, and he served as its first director. Students from thirty nations attended the first course in 1956–1957. Many lifelong friendships resulted from the contacts Colbert made at the Naval Command College.

In 1958, Colbert was assigned to the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, DC, and was involved in long-range strategic planning in the plans and policy directorate. He returned to sea in June 1960 as commanding officer of the cargo ship USS ALTAIR (AKS-32) based in Barcelona, Spain. During this period, ALTAIR pioneered the concept of vertical replenishment in the Navy. From October 1961 to February 1963, he commanded the missile cruiser BOSTON (CAG-1) operating in the Mediterranean.

Early in 1962 Colbert returned to Washington, DC, for an assignment in the State Department as a member of the Policy Planning Council. Promoted to rear admiral, he assumed command of Cruiser Destroyer Flotilla Six in June 1965. A year later he reported to Norfolk, Virginia, as Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant for Policy, Plans, and Operations to the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic.

On August 30, 1968, with the rank of vice admiral, Colbert became President of the Naval War College. During his three years at the College, he implemented several long-range programs which were continued by his successors. Keenly interested in the future development of the Navy's senior educational institution, he inaugurated a program for the construction of three academic buildings over a period of several years. He proposed an increase in student enrollment, and he made changes in the curriculum. He encouraged the study of internal United States affairs through lectures and seminars devoted to social and political movements, strengthened elements of the military education program, and emphasized student research and writing in matters dealing with national security.

During Colbert's tenure, the first International Seapower Symposium was held at the College in 1969. The Symposium was envisioned as an open forum where leaders of free world navies would discuss the implications of rapidly changing maritime situations. In November 1969, the Naval War College Foundation was established as a result of Admiral Colbert's personal interest and initiative. A private non-profit corporation, it provides resources to the Naval War College to help accomplish its educational mission.

In June 1971, Colbert was ordered to duty as Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, with headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia. The next year he was appointed Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe, with the rank of admiral. Ill health forced him to retire on November 25, 1973, and on December 2, 1973, he died at Bethesda Naval Medical Center.

Admiral Colbert received two Distinguished Service Medals, the Legion of Merit, and a Joint Service Commendation Medal. In 1970, Salve Regina College in Newport, Rhode Island, awarded him an Honorary Doctor of Education Degree. On June 24, 1974, the plaza adjacent to the three new academic buildings at the Naval War College was dedicated in his honor. In that same year, a Richard G. Colbert Memorial Prize was established to be awarded annually to the author of the best Naval War College student essay.

DESCRIPTION OF PAPERS

Admiral Colbert deposited his papers in the Naval Historical Collection shortly before his death in 1973. They are divided into six series: Correspondence, Subject Files, Speeches, Miscellany, Classified Official Correspondence, and Classified Subject Files. Separate items are arranged chronologically. Restricted and classified items are included and access is permitted to those with appropriate clearances.

The papers deal primarily with Admiral Colbert's naval career from his days as a midshipman at Annapolis through his last assignment as Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe. His views on matters affecting both the United States Navy and the free world naval community and his international friendships are revealed in the collection. Particular areas of interest are international naval cooperation, the United States Naval War College, the Naval Command College, NATO, free world defenses, and the expansion of Soviet naval forces.

Series I, Correspondence, consists of letters received and copies of letters sent. It is divided into three subseries: personal, semi-official, and foreign officer correspondence. Correspondents include United States and foreign naval officers, national political leaders, society figures, and family members.

Personal correspondence, 1954–1973, forms the bulk of the series. There are no records documenting Admiral Colbert's youth or his service during World War II. Many of the letters are to family members, in particular, to the admiral's father, Charles F. Colbert, Jr. Most of the correspondence relates to his personal life and travels, family financial matters, and career advancement.

Semi-Official correspondence, 1961–1962, 1964–1971, covers the period when Colbert served as commander of the USS BOSTON, commander of Cruiser Destroyer Flotilla Six, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, and President of the Naval War College. Most of the correspondence focuses on matters associated with various assignments: fleet preparedness, defense, the Soviet maritime threat, SACLANT, and Naval War College policies and programs. Correspondents include Admirals Thomas Moorer, Bernard L. Austin, Arleigh A. Burke, Elmo Zumwalt, and Henry Eccles; national political figures, Richard M. Nixon, Walt Rostow, George Kennan, Dean Rusk, William P. Rogers, and Claiborne Pell. Numerous memoranda, both issued by Admiral Colbert and addressed to him, appear through this subseries.

Foreign Officer correspondence, 1957–1971, treats much of the same time period as semi-official correspondence. As one who ardently believed in cooperation among navies of the free world, Admiral Colbert cultivated and maintained personal friendships with many foreign officers. His correspondents include high ranking officers in the navies of Italy, Venezuela, Norway, West Germany, Argentina, Pakistan, France, England, and Brazil, to name a few.

Series II, Subject files, consists of correspondence, memoranda, reports, studies, and notices relating to plans and programs undertaken by Admiral Colbert and his staff during his War College presidency and to matters of international naval cooperation. In addition, there is some material regarding his service in USS ALTAIR, USS BARKER, and USS MEADE, 1939–1961.

The Speech file, Series III, contains convocation and graduation addresses, lectures and public remarks by Admiral Colbert during his three-year Naval War College presidency. Several speeches dealing with national security are classified.

Miscellany, Series IV, consists of photographs, citations, newspaper clippings, programs, a carrier junior officer's training book, and items relating to the destroyer BARKER in the Southwest Pacific, 1941–1944.

Series V, Classified Official correspondence, 1957–1973, covers matters that Colbert was involved in as a flag rank officer. Subjects included are: United States naval operations, United States allies in NATO, STANAVFORLANT, the Naval War College, and the expansion and activities of the Soviet Navy. Memoranda, reports, articles, and lists are enclosures. Some documents in this subseries are classified.

Series VI, Classified subject files, contains materials on NATO, nuclear arrangements, International Seapower Symposium, Soviet naval forces, and the Permanent Inter-American Peace Force, 1964–1972.

ARRANGEMENT OF PAPERS Manuscript Collection 30

$\begin{array}{c} \text{Series I} \\ \text{Correspondence, 1932-1973} \\ (18\frac{1}{2}\text{ boxes}) \end{array}$

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	3	October 14, 1932–December 7, 1932
	4	December 16, 1932–December 21, 1932
	5	January 3, 1933–January 30, 1933
	6	January 30, 1933–February 13, 1933
	7	February 8, 1933–June 8, 1933
	8	June 9, 1933–July 31, 1933
	9	August 1, 1933–September 28, 1933
	10	October 2, 1933–November 25, 1933
	11	November 25, 1933–December 22, 1933
	12	January 1, 1934–January 30, 1934
	13	February 2, 1934–February 26, 1934
	14	March 28, 1934–May 20, 1934
	15	May 31, 1934–July 14, 1934
	16	July 23, 1934–November 21, 1934
	17	November 25, 1934–December 21, 1934
	18	January 2, 1935–March 2, 1935
	19	March 5, 1935–April 21, 1935
	20	April 23, 1935–June 17, 1935
	21	June 17, 1935–August 15, 1935
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Box	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
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	24	January 8, 1936–March 5, 1936
	25	March 9, 1936–May 8, 1936
	26	May 12, 1936–July 14, 1936
2	1	Personal Correspondence, July 20, 1936–September 2, 1936
	2	September 28, 1936–November 22, 1936
	3	November 23, 1936–December 23, 1936
	4	January 7, 1937–February 22, 1937
	5	February 25, 1937–April 21, 1937
	6	April 22, 1937–June 23, 1937
	7	July 1, 1937–August 7, 1937
	8	August 19, 1937–September 27, 1937
	9	September 28, 1937–November 10, 1937
	10	November 13, 1937–December 27, 1937
	11	January 7, 1938–April 29, 1938
	12	April 29, 1938–June 22, 1938
	13	June 29, 1938–November 14, 1938
	14	November 15, 1938–December 19, 1938
	15	November 26, 1947–December 17, 1947
	16	January 5, 1948–February 25, 1948
	17	February 27, 1948–April 13, 1948
	18	April 14, 1948–May 7, 1948
	19	May 8, 1948–June 23, 1948
	20	June 23, 1948–July 24, 1948
	21	July 24, 1948–August 13, 1948
	22	August 16, 1948–September 27, 1948

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	Contents
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	24	October 19, 1948–November 4, 1948
	25	November 4, 1948–December 26, 1948
3	1	Personal Correspondence, January 3, 1951–March 23, 1951
	2	March 23, 1951–May 14, 1951
	3	May 16, 1951–July 30, 1951
	4	July 30, 1951–August 27, 1951
	5	August 27, 1951–September 27, 1951
	6	October 1, 1951–October 31, 1951
	7	November 1, 1951–December 28, 1951
	8	January 1, 1952–February 21, 1952
	9	February 22, 1952–March 31, 1952
	10	March 31, 1952–May 13, 1952
	11	May 14, 1952–June 27, 1952
	12	June 29, 1952–August 4, 1952
	13	August 5, 1952–August 25, 1952
	14	August 25, 1952–October 23, 1952
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	16	January 3, 1954–February 16, 1954
	17	February 17, 1954–March 19, 1954
	18	March 19, 1954–April 10, 1954
	19	April 13, 1954–May 18, 1954
	20	May 18, 1954–July 9, 1954
	21	July 9, 1954–August 7, 1954
	22	August 7, 1954–September 8, 1954
	23	September 13, 1954–October 5, 1954

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	Contents
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	25	November 20, 1954–December 17, 1954
	26	December 17, 1954–December 31, 1954
	27	January 21, 1955–February 21, 1955
	28	February 21, 1955–March 16, 1955
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	8	January 2, 1957–February 20, 1957
	9	February 20, 1957–April 15, 1957
	10	April 15, 1957–May 28, 1957
	11	June 5, 1957–July 2, 1957
	12	July 13, 1957–August 21, 1957
	13	August 21, 1957–September 26, 1957
	14	September 30, 1957–November 6, 1957
	15	November 12, 1957–December 27, 1957
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	17	January 2, 1958–February 6, 1958
	18	February 7, 1958–April 10, 1958
	19	April 10, 1958–April 30, 1958
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	21	June 19, 1958–October 22, 1958

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	Contents
	22	February 2, 1959–July 30, 1959
	23	August 12, 1959–December 11, 1959
	24	January 5, 1960–April 11, 1960
	25	April 11, 1960–July 2, 1960
	26	July 15, 1960–September 15, 1960
	27	September 16, 1960–December 28, 1960
5	1	Personal Correspondence, January 3, 1961–February 27, 1961
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	6	July 5, 1961–August 8, 1961
	7	August 10, 1961–November 10, 1961
	8	November 10, 1961–December 28, 1961
	9	July 6, 1962–August 25, 1962
	10	August 31, 1962–September 27, 1962
	11	September 27, 1962–November 13, 1962
	12	November 13, 1962–December 13, 1962
	13	December 13, 1962–December 28, 1962
	14	January 1, 1963–February 6, 1963
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	16	May 23, 1963–August 26, 1963
	17	September 3, 1963–November 20, 1963
	18	January 22, 1964–April 7, 1964
	19	April 8, 1964–July 9, 1964
	20	July 10, 1964–September 3, 1964

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6	1	Personal Correspondence, September 8, 1964–October 27, 1964
	2	October 28, 1964–December 29, 1964
	3	January 4, 1965–February 11, 1965
	4	February 11, 1965–March 19, 1965
	5	March 22, 1965–April 27, 1965
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	9	August 5, 1965–August 28, 1965
	10	August 31, 1965–October 6, 1965
	11	October 6, 1965–November 2, 1965
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	13	November 17, 1965–December 1, 1965
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	15	December 16, 1965–December 30, 1965
	16	January 4, 1966–January 13, 1966
	17	January 13, 1966–January 28, 1966
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	20	March 17, 1966–April 18, 1966
	21	April 18, 1966–May 17, 1966
	22	May 19, 1966–June 14, 1966
7	1	Personal Correspondence, June 14, 1966–July 1, 1966
	2	July 20, 1966–September 1, 1966
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	16	August 7, 1970–August 28, 1970
	17	August 28, 1970–September 4, 1970
	18	September 4, 1970–September 18, 1970
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20		October 4, 1971–November 10, 1971
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	10	August 1, 1972–August 4, 1972
	11	August 4, 1972–August 11, 1972
	12	August 14, 1972–August 28, 1972
	13	August 28, 1972–September 6, 1972
	14	September 7, 1972–September 18, 1972
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12	1	Personal Correspondence, September 26, 1972–October 9, 1972
	2	October 10, 1972–October 19, 1972
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	10	July 1, 1973–July 10, 1973
	11	July 10, 1973–July 16, 1973
	12	July 16, 1973–July 18, 1973
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	14	July 31, 1973.
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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	Contents		
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	12	January 13, 1970–February 20, 1970		
	13	February 26, 1970–July 27, 1970		
	14	August 3, 1970–October 12, 1970		
	15	October 14, 1970–November 5, 1970		
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	17	April 21, 1971–July 3, 1971		
	18	July 3, 1971–August 18, 1971		
	19	August 26, 1971–September 28, 1971		
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	3	Foreign Officer Correspondence, August 21, 1957–August 18, 1958		
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	6	January 31, 1961–December 1961		
	7	January 5, 1962–June 15, 1962		
	8	July 2, 1967–December 27, 1962		
	9	March 11, 1965–July 31, 1965		
	10	August 4, 1965–January 3, 1966		
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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	Contents		
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	14	January 3, 1967–May 11, 1967		
	15	June 1, 1967–September 6, 1967		
	16	September 18, 1967–December 29, 1967		
	17	January 22, 1968–April 1, 1968		
	18	April 1, 1968–May 27, 1968		
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20	1	Subject Files, Student Body Expansion, 1968–1969			
	2–5	USS ALTAIR (AKS-32), 1959–1961			
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		Series III Speeches, Undated–1973 (1½ boxes)			
	12–15	Speeches, typescript copies, undated			
	Change of Command, Destroyer Squadrons 14 and 16, Ma Florida, 1965–1966				
	17 Change of Command, Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Flot Six, USS LEAHY, 1966; Naval War College Convocations, Newport, RI 1967–1968				
	18	Naval War College Convocation, Newport, RI; U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association, Boston Chapter, 1969			
	19	Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and Rhode Island Councils of Navy League testimonial dinner for Secretary of the			

Box Folder Contents Navy John A. Chaffee; OCS Graduations, Newport, RI; U.S. Naval Academy Foreign Affairs Conference, Annapolis, MD, 1969.

- Army birthday ceremony; Naval Command and Staff Course graduation; Philadelphia Council of the Navy League, Philadelphia, PA, 1969
- 21 New York Commandery, 1969
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 - 2 Area Council Boys Clubs of America, Newport, RI; Sixth Conference of Naval Colleges of Americas, Newport, RI, 1970
 - 3 Convocation, Naval War College, 1970; closing remarks, Naval Command College, 1970
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 - 6 Salve Regina College, Newport, RI, 1970; Pfizer Group, 1970
 - 7 Dedication of William McCarty Little Lecture Hall, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 1970; Global Strategy Discussions Welcoming remarks, 1971; Coast Guard Academy, 1973

Series IV Miscellany, 1940–1971 (1½ boxes)

- Photographs of ocean area, USS BARKER, July 1945; photographs, of Admiral Colbert, Headquarters, Sixth Naval District, Naval Base, Charleston, SC, 1965, and at Salve Regina College Convocation, Newport, RI, September 12, 1970; newspaper clippings and press releases regarding presentation of honorary degree to Admiral Colbert by Salve Regina College, September 23, 1970
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